

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

CANADIANA

JUN - 4 1990



Fact Sheet No. 8

Symbols and Traditions: The Emblems of Alberta

What does the wild rose have in common with the lodgepole pine? How are they both connected with great horned owls and petrified wood?

They are emblems of Alberta. An emblem is a figure or an object which symbolizes an idea and serves as a distinctive badge. Alberta's emblems symbolize the history of the province, its people, its flora and fauna, its geographical setting, even its existence as a province. From the coat of arms to the Alberta tartan, each emblem signifies an important aspect of Alberta's identity.

Coat of Arms



official flag of the Hudson's Bay Company. The mountains, foothills, prairies, and wheat fields unfold beneath it, symbolizing the province's variety of landscapes.

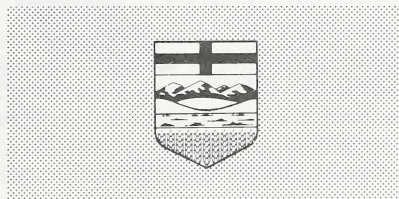
On May 30, 1907, King Edward VII assigned the province of Alberta its armorial bearings. Shaped like a shield, they form the centre of our coat of arms. At the top of the shield is a red St. George's cross, the

On Alberta's 75th anniversary in 1980 a crest and supporters were added to the armorial bearings to form our official coat of arms. The crest consists of a beaver, symbol of the fur trade which led to the exploration and settlement of Canada, with the royal crown on its back. The supporters, a Lion Or (golden lion) on the left and a pronghorn antelope on the right, stand for Britain and Alberta respectively. Below them is a grassy mount dotted with wild roses. The motto at the base reads *Fortis et Liber*, Latin for "strong and free."

A detailed carving of the Alberta coat of arms adorns the main entrance of the Chamber in the Legislature Building. It was made from Honduran red mahogany by Brent Efird, an Alberta artist who studied at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology in Edmonton. The carving was unveiled on September 3, 1987, on the 75th anniversary of the Legislature Building.

Alberta's Flag

The armorial bearings are also found on the flag of Alberta, which was adopted in 1968. It consists of the Arms of Alberta centred against a royal ultramarine blue background.



Floral Emblem

The **wild rose** or prickly rose (*Rosa acicularis*) was designated the floral emblem of Alberta in 1930. Its bright pink blossoms enhance the countryside in all parts of the province. Moreover, the wild rose is a useful shrub. Its colourful red berries feed many species of birds and may also be made into delicious teas and jellies.



Tartan

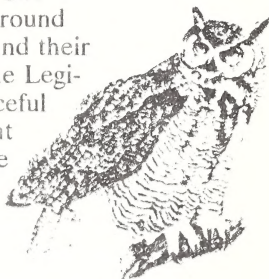
Alberta's tartan pays tribute to the Scottish component of its heritage, the colours representing our abundant natural resources: green for forests, gold for wheat fields, blue for lakes, pink for wild roses, and black for coal and petroleum. The tartan was designed



by the Edmonton Rehabilitation Society for the Handicapped and was officially recognized in 1961.

Official Bird

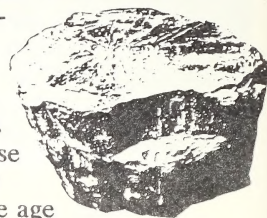
A king assigned Alberta its armorial bearings, but it was the province's schoolchildren who chose our official bird. They voted in 1977 for the **great horned owl** (*Bubo virginianus*), a year-round resident of the province, and their choice was approved by the Legislature in 1977. A resourceful and resilient bird, the great horned owl exemplifies the best traits of Alberta's people, past and present.



Official Stone

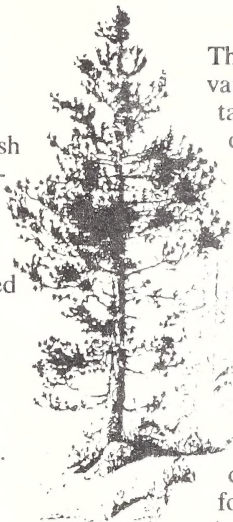
Also in 1977, the Legislative Assembly recognized **petrified wood** as the official stone

of Alberta. Petrified wood was originally formed in coal seams and later carried by water and deposited in stream and river beds and gravel pits throughout Alberta. It is a semi-precious stone, used in jewelry and ornaments. The choice of petrified wood was especially appropriate because of the stone's natural beauty and because it belongs to the age when oil was first formed.



A Tree for Alberta

The **lodgepole pine** (*Pinus contorta* var. *latifolia*) has played an important role in Alberta's economic development. Long ago Indians used it for teepee poles, hence its name. During Alberta's settlement, it was an important source of railroad ties, while today the long, straight lodgepole pine is in great demand in the lumber industry. It is a western tree, peculiar to the Rocky Mountains. The lodgepole pine became Alberta's official tree in 1984, the culmination of four years of effort by the Junior Forest Wardens Association of Alberta.



Our Provincial Mammal

In 1989 the Assembly designated the **Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep** (*Ovis canadensis*) Alberta's official mammal. Bighorn sheep are commonly seen in the Rocky Mountains, and the species was first described by scientists in Banff in 1804. Alberta is home to about 6,000 of these agile animals. Like the great horned owl, the bighorn sheep was chosen by schoolchildren in a poll of over 3,000 schools. It has a proud carriage, crowned by its magnificent horns, and is a majestic inhabitant of a majestic province.

